

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

might link the United States and Iran politically. Russia's main aim, it was asserted, was to keep America at arm's length from Iran, so that Soviet schemes might not be frustrated by the presence of a powerful newcomer in this part of the world.

Another interpretation was that Russia really wanted oil and believed that the war period was most propitious for obtaining a concession. Such a concession, it was argued, would place Russia not only in possession of a coveted raw material, but would also serve as an instrument of Soviet influence on Iranian politics.

Whatever the real motive of Soviet action at the time, the fact is that on October 16 the Iranian government rejected all offers for concessions, i.e., American, British, and Soviet. Thus the first interpretation of the Russian action seemed to have been vindicated. However this was not the end of the drama. Six days later *Trud*, organ of the Soviet trade unions, published an article headlined "The Words and Deeds of Mr. Sa'ed"¹ in which the policy of the Iranian Prime Minister was strongly attacked. The Iranian government was accused of neglect for not punishing the "harmful actions of certain evil-intentioned elements" who had sabotaged the regular flow of Allied supplies to the Soviet Union through Iran and for not opposing the "intensification of subversive work of profascist elements."¹ The Premier himself was criticized for having rendered Iran's relations with the Allies "strained and tense." The well-known technique of reproducing Iranian editorials was used when *Trud* quoted the Tudeh-affiliated *Shah-baz* as saying: "Reactionaries have set Premier Sa'ed to the task of smashing workers' and democratic organizations, and for this purpose he has introduced a bill for the militarization of

industry." *Trud*
revealed that a number of Iranian newspapers were
inquiring why
Premier Sa'ed did not resign and concluded by stating
that the "con-
tinuation of Premier Sa'ed's policy is harming the
interests of Iran
and of the Iranian people."²⁶ On the same day *The
War and the
Working Class* significantly cited American statistics in
order to prove
that the United States controlled 57 per cent of the
world's oil re-
sources, Great Britain 27 per cent, and the Soviet
Union only 11
per cent.²⁷

2« Quoted in the *New York Times*, Oct. 23, 1944.

**27 it is interesting to note that on other occasions Soviet
propaganda asserted**